

PressRelease

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State holds meeting on proposed rate settlement with Northwest Natural Gas

OLYMPIA, Wash. - Natural gas customers of Northwest Natural Gas Co. will be able to comment to state regulators on a proposed rate-increase settlement during an Oct. 12 public hearing in Vancouver.

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) has scheduled the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 12 in the Water Resource Education Center, 4600 S.E. Columbia Way, Vancouver.

The three-member commission must approve the settlement agreement before it would go into effect. The agreed-upon \$4.3 million-a-year proposed settlement would be phased in over two years. The company would be allowed a \$3 million annual increase effective Nov. 1, which would result in residential customers paying an additional 7.2 percent on their monthly natural gas bill. Beginning Oct. 1, 2001, the company would be allowed to raise rates by \$1.3 million a year. Average residential customers would realize a rate increase of 4.1 percent a month.

The proposed settlement agreement has been signed by the company, WUTC regulatory staff, Office of the Attorney General Public Counsel, Northwest Industrial Gas Users, SEH America, Inc. and the Washington Food Industry.

In January, Northwest Natural filed a natural-gas rate increase request of \$6.2 million a year with the commission.

The WUTC has received 107 public comments in opposition and one in favor of the proposed natural-gas increase. The three-member commission has the authority to set natural-gas rates for the private investor-owned utilities in Washington.

Northwest Natural is headquartered in Portland, Ore. and provides natural gas service to about 39,000 customers in Clark, Skamania and Klickitat counties in Southwest Washington.

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documents in alternate
format, call (360) 664-1133.

If members of the public would like to comment but are unable to attend the public meeting, they may write to the secretary of the WUTC at P.O. Box 47250, Olympia, Wash. 98504-7250. Comments also may be sent via e-mail to the following address: <http://www.wutc.wa.gov>.

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